



St. Paul's Lutheran Family, ELCA

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Dear Members & Associates of St. Paul's Lutheran Family,

As we enter the month of May, many of us find ourselves wondering with increasing intensity *when* and *how* we will be able to gather again at St. Paul's—for meetings, classes, worship, and funerals.

With you, I yearn for the day when we can be in the same space together, praying, singing, sharing the Word and the sacraments, fellowshiping and serving. Yet, we still have some distance to run along the COVID-19 'marathon'. Though this is a marathon none of us chose to run, we nonetheless find ourselves running it, plodding our way together through a parched wilderness.

While we await word from the governor of Nevada on the 'Stay-at-Home' order, which has been extended through May 15, and the state's phasing in of business and gatherings, I invite all of us to consider the following:

- I strongly recommend that worship and other ministry gatherings, including funerals, not meet at St. Paul's until sometime in **June**. This includes church office hours. Technology allows our office assistant, Brette Elander, and I to do much of the church office work from home; we are even able to have calls to the church office redirected to one of our mobile phones.
- I also strongly recommend that the council and Worship Life team meet with me (via Zoom) later this month to begin planning for gentle, gradual, and intentional processes of moving toward in-person gatherings. This planning must be rooted in guidance from the CDC and from our civic authorities as well as our theological commitments and concern for the common good and service to our neighbor. There are online resources available to council members and committee chairs to assist in all aspects of ministry in the time of COVID-19—from Christian Education to Stewardship.
- I also encourage you to help me in reaching out to other members & friends of St. Paul's who either do not have a computer or use a computer. For example, if you have access to YouTube and are able to watch the Sunday services on St. Paul's YouTube channel, **consider calling up a non-computer-using neighbor and invite them to listen to the service.** When you call your non-computer using friend, go to YouTube and click on play to start the videos. Then, simply place your phone near the computer

speaker, so they can listen along as you watch the videos. Also consider this for the live-stream ‘Midweek Prayer’ (Wednesdays at 12 noon), ‘What’s Brewing’ Check-In Time (Saturdays at 7 pm), live-stream ‘Brief Order of Holy Communion’ (Sundays at 2 pm).

- Ministry committee members: please reach out to me AND to the council liaison for your committee in help in sorting through what meetings or other gatherings might look like in your context. Again, there are resources available from both the ELCA and our ecumenical partners with new and creative ways to do ministry!
- Assume that we will not be able to simply flip a switch and return to what was before. Our life together as the body of Christ and in service to our neighbors is going to be very different moving forward. If you are on council or a committee chair, be humble and gentle with one another in your planning. Honor each other’s emotional responses to changes in your life as a community of faith. ***Make space for lament***, without taking the burdens you hear expressed personally. ***Welcome moments of joy***; there will be moments of joy in the discovery of new ways we can do ministry together! ***Help each other live into hope***; support one another, as we run this marathon together. ***Learn from this journey*** through the coronavirus wilderness and let the learning lead you forward. Finally, ***trust that God is at work in this time*** and look for the new things God is doing even now.

Again, what I offer in this letter are, at this time, only *my* thoughts and recommendations. St. Paul’s church council will meet later this month, on **Tuesday, May 12**, via Zoom, at which time these recommendations—as well as the recommendation which will come to us through the Sierra-Pacific Synod—will be considered as we explore what being ‘church’ in the time of pandemic will ‘look’ like.

In an early treatise entitled *On the Good of Patience*, the Bishop Cyprian suggested that when Christians entrusted themselves to the patient God, who steadfastly and persistently continues to work hope, healing, and reconciliation in the world, and lived patiently with themselves and others, they shone with the light of Christ in ways that both ran against the impatience of the cultures in which they lived and drew others into the community of Christ. May God give us such patience and peace, now and in the days ahead!

The peace of the risen Christ be with you!

Rev. Chad R. Adamik, pastor